Contexte scientifique de la naissance des médicaments homéopathiques en Europe centrale. Arrivée en Espagne et divulgation.

Scientific context of the birth of homeopathic drugs in Central Europe. Arrival to Spain and divulgation

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Objective:
To rescue the History of homeopathy, particularly in the context of Spain, and enhance its diffusion through the knowledge of its History
Samuel Christian Friedrich Hahnemann (1755-1843) was born in the middle of the 18th century in Saxony, in the heart of Europe. During his childhood he studied under the supervision of his parents. In 1755 he started to study Medicine in Leipzig. At that time Medicine studies were theoretical. German medicine, strongly influenced by the doctrines of Paracelsus in the 17th century, returned to the works of Hippocrates in the 18th century.
This type of lessons soon bored Hahnemann and He moved to Vienna. His thesis was titled A Dissertation on the Causes and Treatment of Cramps ("Conspectus adfectuum spasmodicorum aetiologicus y therapeuticus").
He talked about rationalising the knowledge of medicines and of practical medicine. Both approaches are the two foundations of his studies. In 1796, He published “investigations of a new principle for finding the healing powers of pharmacological substances”. Since 1808 he used the term Homeopathy in his “Letter to a high-rank physician about the urgency of reforming medicine” to refer to the non-homeopathic effects of classic medicines. He used the healing method similia similibus to obtain a long-lasting result and with the aid of very low doses, subjecting the medicine to stirring and individualising the treatment. He knew what chemistry can contribute as a source of rationality in medicine, while highlighting its limits in some type of treatment. Hahnemann designed a therapeutic method based on the observation of the similimum between the experimental symptoms in the healthy subject and the ill subject. His only wish was to collaborate to make the knowledge of medicines more rational.
**Results:**

Homeopathy arrived at Spain in the first quarter of the 19th century: in 1821 the first news about this method were published in the journal "Décadas Médico-Quirúrgicas y Farmacéuticas" of Madrid and in 1826 an article on Homeopathy was published in the "Diario General Ciencias Médicas" of Barcelona, that published two other articles in 1828 developing more extensively this therapeutics.

After this, the history of homeopathy in Spain will be linked to the Royal Family.
Dr. Prudencio Querol was the first Spanish physician to use Homeopathy. In 1830, when he had lived in Madrid for about seven years, he became aware of a long article published by The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal: for October 1829... January 1830, disseminator of the works of S. Hahnenann, from which he began to study Homeopathy and will be the first Spanish physician to use publicly Homeopathy in Badajoz since 1832, a city considered in many works as the cradle of Spanish Homeopathy.
After moving to Seville He continued with his intense homeopathic activity, training a high number of followers, including Agustín López del Baño, José Nostench and Juan Lorenzo Vélez. He died on April 18th, 1858, 83 years old and was buried in the Sevillian cemetery of San Fernando.
Dr. Pedro Rino y Hurtado, a disciple of Dr. Querol as early as 1833 in the city of Badajoz, in collaboration with the pharmacist Mr. Juan Manuel Rubiales, started in 1838 a huge dissemination task, both in his medical practice and through his Files of Homeopathic Medicine, Badajoz 1840-1842 (the first with an original work in Spanish) and Barcelona 1877-1882, and as author of several books and translator of major Homeopathy treatises.

In Spain and in this first stage, the most important precursors of this therapeutic method, in addition to the above, were other active physicians such as Dr. Ramón Ysaac López Pinciano.

Dr. José Sebastián Coll, who started to study and practice Homeopathy when he was almost sixty years old, implemented at the Hospital of Toro, in 1839, the first section of Homeopathic Hospital Care at a Spanish public centre (with the collaboration of the pharmacist Mr. Alejandro Rodríguez Tejedor), and in 1845 he was elected first chairman of the Hahnemannian Society of Madrid.
In 1845, the first society of Spanish homeopathists was founded, the Hahnemannian Society of Madrid, authorised by Royal Decree-Law of April 23, 1846, and it was the driving force of Homeopathy in Spain, promoter of the creation in Madrid of the Homeopathic Institute and Hospital de San José, opened in 1878.

Instituto Homeopático y Hospital de San José (1878)
Dr. José Núñez y Pernía (1805-1879) was one of the most important Spanish homeopathic physicians of the 19th century. He was appointed chairman of the Hahnemannian Society of Madrid in November, 1845.

Another important homeopathist of this was Dr. Joaquín de Hysern y Molleras (1804-1883). Dr. Anastasio García López (1821-1897) had a singular relevance. In 1890 the Medical-Homeopathic Academy of Barcelona was founded, with Dr. García López as first honorary chairman.
In the next decades, the expansion of Homeopathy was constant all over the world. In Spain, Homeopathy continued to be developed, and Dr. Augusto Vinyals Roig (1886-1951), after the 1st International Congress of Homeopathy held in Barcelona in 1924 (organised by the Medical-Homeopathic Academy of Barcelona), estimated that there were 124 homeopathic physicians in Spain in the year 1925, a figure proportionally comparable to that of other countries, such as France, the United Kingdom, or Germany.

The Spanish Civil War of 1936 influenced our history in all areas, marking a turning point in the evolution of society, culture, and science. With regard to Homeopathy, it meant a loss of continuity over the developments of this medical doctrine in the 19th century.
In general it can be said that the traces of this therapeutics have disappeared progressively from the collective memory.

In 1987, Prof. María Teresa Alfonso Galán estimated that the number of homeopathic physicians in Spain was 130. Some years later, in 1995, a national census of homeopathic physicians was created that included 594 professionals. In the year 2000, Dr. Marcos Mantero de Aspe published his doctoral dissertation titled “El Ejercicio Médico de la Homeopatía en España a finales del siglo XX (análisis médico legal)” (The medical practice of homeopathy in Spain late in the 20th century: medical-legal analysis), estimating that 1,200 physicians practiced Homeopathy in Spain. In 2010 it is estimated that 10,000 physicians prescribe homeopathic medicines occasionally or regularly.
In 2008, the number of retail pharmacies working regularly or occasionally giving pharmaceutical advice on homeopathic medicines was estimated to be 5,000. In the year 2011, all Spanish retail pharmacies had access to homeopathic medicines in 24 hours.
In recent years, national congresses of homeopathy are held every two years: 2008 in Valladolid, 2010 in Barcelona, and 2012 in Oviedo. The next will be held in Madrid in 2014.

With regard to the number of people using homeopathic medicines or treatments, it is estimated that there are more than 300 million patients all over the world.
• Conclusions:

• Homeopathy is not very well known in Spain, except to medical specialists and pharmacists. The public in general knows it even less. In the pharmacy degrees of the school of pharmacy of Seville, for example, nothing is studied about it, except briefly in the subject of history of pharmacy and legislative issues. To establish it, Spanish health professionals should know its History in depth, as it is not something new in the Spanish Healthcare System. The statements of this communication, of international dimension, can be a first step to achieve it.
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